

## GOVERNOR (1949-1957: Lee) [446]

### FRENCH *MERCI* TRAIN GIFTS, 1949.

3.0 cu. ft.

**DESCRIPTION:** This series contains items from the French *Merci* Train presented to the State of Utah from the people of France in 1949. Among the gifts preserved in the series are a number of books, (all in French and mostly relating to France, French history, and World War I), artwork, various medals, and cloth stars, hand embroidered with French and American place names.

In 1947 a train, dubbed the "Friendship Train" traveled across the United States collecting supplies to be sent to the aid of war-devastated Europe. The *Merci* Train was a gesture of gratitude from the people of France to the people of the United States for this aid given in time of need. The *Merci* Train or Gratitude Train consisted of 49 boxcars, one for each of the 48 states and one to be divided between the District of Columbia and the Territory of Hawaii. The gifts that filled the boxcars included a wide variety of items donated by the people of France. The *Salt Lake Tribune* noted that among the items in the Utah boxcar were "native costumes from all sections of France, as well as many finely costumed dolls, a book of paintings on silk, wooden shoes, vases and crystal, books, lingerie, wine, historic souvenirs, lace and many 'thank you' gifts made by the children of France". Items from the boxcar were apparently distributed throughout Utah and some items were displayed in the State Capitol. The ultimate fate of most of the items is unknown. The boxcar itself stood on display in Memory Grove in Salt Lake City for many years. A couple of placards included in the series suggest that the items in this series were on display at some point, possibly in the Capitol. The items ultimately became associated with Governor Lee's office because Governor Lee officially accepted the gifts on behalf of the State in a ceremony on February 22, 1949 and appointed a committee to oversee the distribution of the gifts. The series is most important as documentation of the contents of the *Merci* Train.

**ARRANGEMENT:** This series has no systematic arrangement, except that the books and

artwork are stored separately from the rest of the artifacts.

**RESEARCH NOTE:** Because the items in this series have value primarily as artifacts rather than as documents, the series has not been microfilmed. Although Governor Lee accepted the *Merci* Train boxcar for the State of Utah and appointed a committee to distribute the gifts from the train, his papers contain only a few documents relating to the train. The whereabouts of records for the Utah *Merci* Train committees is unknown.

**RELATED RECORDS:** The bulk of correspondence from Governor Lee's office, including several letters relating to the *Merci* Train (see "F" Correspondence, Misc.), can be found in Series 211, CORRESPONDENCE.

**PROCESSING NOTE:** This series was kept because of the intrinsic value of the items it contains. It was processed by Alan Barnett in December 2003.

**PREFERRED CITATION:** Cite the Utah State Archives and Records Service, the creating agency name, the series title, and the series number.

## CONTAINER LIST

Box	Item	Description
1	1	[Art print by E. L. Cousyn under glass]
1	2	<i>La France De Louis XIV</i> par Peirre Gaxotte
1	3	<i>Le Forces De L'industry</i> par Louis Bourdeau
1	4	<i>Les Plus Belles Cathedrales De France</i> , L'abbe J.-J. Bourasse
1	5	<i>En Normandie: De La Dives Au Mont-Saint-Michel</i>
1	6	<i>Images Bretonnes</i>
1	7	<i>Fais ce que Dois</i> , Charles Simond
1	8	<i>Le Huetième Arrondissement: Souvenirs D'hier et D'aujourd'hui</i>
1	9	<i>Richesses De Vaucluse</i>
1	10	<i>La Vierge Et L'enfant Dans L'art Français</i> , Maurice Vloberg
1	11	<i>Le Miroir</i> , 7 Janvier 1917 - 30 Décembre 1917
2	1	"Interpretation of the Emblem of the United States" [colored wood block print by R. Louis and A. Herry]
2	2	<i>Cent Beaux Aspects Du Réseau P. L. M.</i> [A Hundred Fine Views Around the Line P. L. M.]
2	3	<i>Jeanne D'Arc</i> par Gabriel Hanotaux
3	1	<i>Le Visage de la France</i>
3	2	<i>L'ami Fritz</i> par Erckmann-Chatrian
4	1	<i>Amiens 1914-1918</i> , Albert Chatelle

<b>Box</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>
4	2	<i>Le Musée D'Art: Histoire Générale de l'Art au Nine Siècle</i>
5	1	[Hand-beaded hat]
5	2	[Commemorative silver medal in a case, "Reconnaissance De L'Association Des Mutiles Des Yeux De France & Des Colonies"]
5	3	[Commemorative silver standing medallion, "Napoleon I"]
5	4	[Leaf-shaped brass clip]
5	5	[World War I ribbon and medal, "Republique Francaise, 1914,1917"]
5	6	[18 Cloth stars embroidered with French and American place names, "Echery", "Chicago", "Lille", "Rombach", "Alsace", "New York", "Paris", "Akron", etc.]